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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to offer preschool staff who are working with children with special needs a process for supporting children and families through the transition to kindergarten. It begins by discussing the teachers role as a partner to parents of children with disabilities. A timeline is then presented for planning a child's transition to kindergarten. Goals and student educational objectives are listed for September to December, January to February, and March to June. Tips are provided for writing a teacher report for the Committee on Special Education, as well as for providing a transition portfolio for the kindergarten teacher. Activities are also listed for helping children to be emotionally ready to transition to kindergarten. The booklet then discusses home school placement and placement in inclusive schools. A reading list on transition is provided, along with transition books for students. Appendices include a Kindergarten Survival Skills Checklist, an observation checklist to help parents and educators organize information and impressions of a programs suitability for a particular child, a list of questions for parents to consider to assess a student's program needs, and a transition to kindergarten timeline for planning for preschool staff, parents, and school staff. (CR)

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Timelines and Guidelines for Preschool Staff Working with Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families

Written by Ellen Barnes, 1997
Updated by Dianne Apter and Rachael Zubal, 2001

EC 308959

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This booklet is designed for preschool staff who are working with children with special needs. It was created as part of ***Paving the Way to Kindergarten***, a project funded by the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, to maximize successful transitions to kindergarten. Timelines and Guidelines was written and edited by Ellen Barnes. Much of it was based on the original work of Ellen Donovan, who created a document on transitions to kindergarten as part of her Master's project at Syracuse University. We are grateful to the staff of Jowonio School who have effectively paved the way to kindergarten for many children with special needs and who have formulated and implemented this process.

We also express thanks to the parents and professionals who reviewed and made suggestions about this booklet. The content is the work of the authors.

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THE NEXT STEP IS A BIG ONE

For teachers and parents of young children with special needs, the transition from preschool to kindergarten is a momentous and often stressful event. In fact, preparing for this move can become one of the primary concerns in the last year of preschool. Preschool may be the first relationship that many parents and children build with another caretaker. Special education services at this age can be flexible, inclusive, and offer a personal contact between school staff and parents. This move to kindergarten is a big step, especially for a first child and for a child with special needs; parents may worry about how their child's needs will be met in a larger setting.

For parents, the transition to kindergarten evokes a range of feelings and anxieties.

- ✓ *Some parents are dealing with the unexpected reality that their child's special needs were not eliminated through early intervention.*

- ✓ *Parents are also sometimes anxious about the separation from the relative security and intimacy of preschool to what they may view as a larger and necessarily less personal public school system.*

- ✓ *Parents of children who have participated in an inclusive preschool experience are anxious about the availability of similar programming in kindergarten. They have seen their children model typical behaviors, develop mutual relationships with typical peers, and participate in age-appropriate experiences while given the individual support needed to reach their goals.*

- ✓ *Parents worry about their child being viewed as different by teachers and peers; they fear that their child will not become an accepted and supported member of the school and the community, and may not continue the growth and progress that was begun in preschool.*

- ✓ *Parents may not know who to go to with questions about the new school and the transition process.*

This booklet is designed to offer the staff of preschools serving young children with special needs a process for supporting children and families through the transition to kindergarten. It is a companion to Moving On[1], a booklet designed to support parents through this same process.

[1]Available from the Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University, 805 South Crouse Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13244-2280, 315-443-3851.

A TEACHER'S ROLE AS PARTNER

As a teacher of a preschooler with special needs, you have many tasks and priorities competing for your time and attention. When you have children approaching school age in your class, you have an added responsibility in addition to daily program planning and management. Through your efforts, you can affect decisions that will have a profound and lasting impact on this child and his/her family. You can assume a proactive role in the transition process and have an impact on the outcome. You know intimately a child's strengths and needs. You can also work closely with a child's family to clarify their goals for school-age programming.

In order to be effective in assuring a smooth transition to kindergarten, you will need:

- ✓ Knowledge of education laws and regulations. This can be acquired through school districts, state education departments, and advocacy agencies.
- ✓ Carefully written recommendations for future programming, based on documented observations. You may be suggesting programming models that do not now exist in a district and require creative problem-solving and change.
- ✓ Knowledge of a variety of kindergarten program models.

- ✓ Skills to guide parents through their participation in the special education process. You will be helping them to understand their rights, to assume their share of the responsibility for decisions about their child, and to become effective communicators and informed advocates.
- ✓ Strategies for building positive working alliances with school district staff in order to create an effective transition.

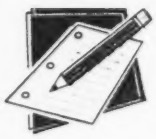
In the following pages are suggestions and resources for planning kindergarten transitions. Preschool staff, parents, and school district staff must approach this task as a team working in close coordination.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN: A TIMELINE FOR PLANNING

FALL (SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER)

- ✓ Establish functional objectives for future kindergarten survival
- ✓ Obtain a copy of district kindergarten curriculum
- ✓ Document social involvement with typical peers
- ✓ Talk with parents about the transition to kindergarten
- ✓ Initiate contact with school district and identify liaison; create a log for contacts
- ✓ Provide parents with resources about the transition
- ✓ Observe existing kindergarten programs

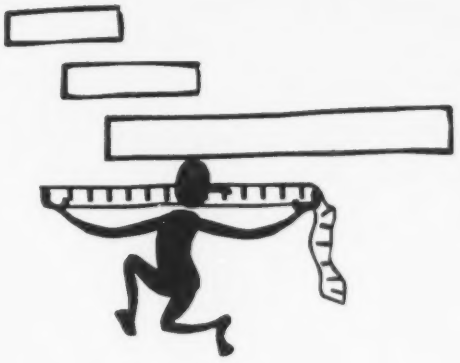
WINTER (JANUARY TO FEBRUARY)



- ✓ Assess child's generalization of skills to settings and adults
- ✓ Arrange for school staff to observe student in preschool
- ✓ Establish evaluation plan and timeline with the district
- ✓ Hold parent meeting on transition process
- ✓ Planning meeting with district, parents, and preschool staff

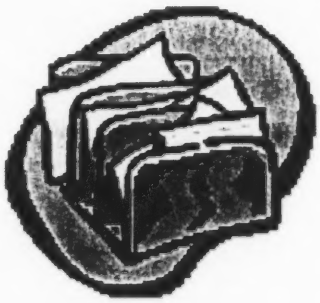
SPRING (MARCH TO JUNE)

- ✓ Complete assessments, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) updates, Annual Review
- ✓ Help parents identify priorities for kindergarten
- ✓ Collaborate with district staff about Committee on Special Education (CSE) paperwork
- ✓ Discuss educational disability and placement options with district and parents
- ✓ Meet with parents prior to CSE
- ✓ Prepare presentation to CSE
- ✓ Visit kindergarten after placement is made
- ✓ Prepare portfolio on child for kindergarten teacher
- ✓ Prepare child for transition to new school
- ✓ Follow-up with child, parent, kindergarten teacher



A TIMELINE

This material is organized along a timeline to give a manageable way to approach what can be a complicated process. The timeline is intended to suggest a sequence of actions, rather than a rigid schedule; a great deal of variation in this sequence is to be expected depending on the individual situation. For some children, because of the nature of their needs or because of the range of services already available in their school district, the planning process can be relatively simple. For other children, significant planning and advocacy efforts are necessary. The main point of the timeline is to demonstrate the need for foresight and organization.



FALL (SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER)

— **Establish child-centered objectives aimed at developing skills that will contribute to success in the projected next environment.**

Studies of skills required by kindergarten teachers as critical for successful functioning are often not those emphasized in special education preschool settings (Vincent, Salisbury, Walter, Brown, Gruenewald, & Powers, 1980). As children enter their last year of preschool, we must be conscious of preparing them for success in elementary school. An instrument entitled The Kindergarten Survival Skills Checklist (see Appendix A) is a useful way to look at a child and use the results to set functional goals. (Of course not all districts require these as entry skills.)

NECESSARY SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN KINDERGARTEN

Task-Related

- Holds and/or manipulates materials
- Follows a three-part direction related to task
- Makes choices
- Finds materials needed for task
- Works on assigned task for 15 minutes
- Completes task independently
- Self-corrects errors
- Recalls and completes task previously demonstrated

School and Classroom Rules and Routines

- Can "line up" and stay in line
- Raises hand and/or gets teacher's attention when necessary
- Replaces materials and cleans up work space
- Moves through routine transitioning smoothly
- Waits to take turns and shares
- Controls voice in classroom
- Stays in "own space" for activity
- Knows way around school and playground

— **Obtain a copy of the district kindergarten curriculum to review.**

— **Document a child's involvement with typical peers at school.**

— **Initiate a conversation with parents about the transition to kindergarten; talk with them about what they want for their child and about the process of transitioning students. Be aware of the emotions and concerns that parents have when they think of children moving on. Reassure them that you will support them in the process and that positive alliances will be built with the district staff.**

FORMING A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

- Remember that each family is unique and has strengths to build on.
- Learn to listen without passing judgement or offering opinions.
- Respond in a way that shows you want to hear more, that you value the information the parent is sharing, that your own agenda can wait.
- Ask how you can be of assistance and then be available or refer to someone who can; be dependable and flexible.
- Value parents for who they are and what they want.
- Be in touch with your own issues about families.
- Share information about what is happening for their child at school and emphasize the positives.
- Reinforce parents for their efforts; help them feel competent.
- Share your own questions and lack of knowledge; don't be afraid to say "I don't know, but I'll try and find out."
- Ask for parent input, and show them that things can change on the basis of their feedback.
- Help parents see their child's growth and their own; help them enjoy their child.
- Don't use jargon; use understandable terms.
- Preserve confidentiality.
- Connect parents with each other.

— **Initiate contact with the district and identify the liaison who will be the contact person for you and the parents during the transition.**

— **Provide parents with resources regarding the legal and procedural aspects of the transition. There are parent guidebooks available from the state education department, through your preschools, the school districts, and local advocacy agencies.**

— **Observe, with parents, existing kindergarten programs in the home district for children with special needs. Observing in the fall offers a better picture of the entry skills needed for the students and the nature of the routines and expectations for the beginning of kindergarten. See Appendix B for a checklist to use in observing in a school.**

WINTER (JANUARY TO FEBRUARY)

- **Continue functional skills emphasis.**
- **Document peer interaction.**
- **Assess a child's ability to generalize, i.e., to use his/her skills in different settings, with different adults or peers.**

- **Request that a school district staff member observe the child in preschool.**

- **Clarify the district's plan to evaluate the child, including who will do the evaluation, when and where it will be done, and a timeline for completed reports, feedback meetings with parents, Annual Review, and CSE.**

- **Plan on a parent meeting on the transition to kindergarten, so that parents gain an understanding of the CSE process and how to build alliances and advocate effectively for their child. One powerful approach is to have a panel of parents whose children have already transitioned share their experiences through the process. Questions these parent panel members may address include:**

  - ✓ What are the differences between preschool and the public schools?
  - ✓ What did you do to help your child prepare for the transition?
  - ✓ How did your child deal with the change?
  - ✓ How did you deal with the change?
  - ✓ How can you find out what is happening at school?
  - ✓ How can you develop a relationship with the teacher? The administrator?
  - ✓ What techniques have you found successful in solving problems with the school?

- **Arrange an initial planning meeting between parents, district, and preschool staff. Discuss child's program needs, parents' priorities, and potential models of service, including inclusion.**

SPRING (MARCH TO JUNE)

— **Complete all assessments and mid-year IEP updates; schedule and attend the child's Annual Review.**

— **Support parents in identifying their priorities for their child's kindergarten year. See Appendix C for a questionnaire that may help parents focus on their child's program needs.**

— **Work with district staff to complete multi-disciplinary evaluation and Committee on Special Education (CSE) paperwork.**

— **In planning discussions with district staff discuss identification (educational disability) as well as placement decisions.** ***Individual educators and districts may have their own criteria for children within the federal and state definitions. There is a pragmatic aspect to the assignment of a specific classification in that, in some cases, services may be tied to it.***

— **Continue planning meetings with the district to clarify specific program elements. Meet with parents to discuss testing results, recommendations, and the CSE process. Remember to speak in understandable terms. If parents wish, you may help them create a statement for the CSE meeting; remind them to bring a picture of their son or daughter to the meeting. This gives the committee members a face for the child being discussed.**

— **Prepare for and participate in the CSE meeting. Write a Teacher Report that will be available to district evaluation staff as well as CSE members. Be prepared to present a succinct statement (approximately 3-5 minutes) at the CSE meeting as well.** ***Practicing this report ahead of time to other staff members can be helpful, to get feedback about style and clarity, as well as increase confidence.***

Teacher Report for CSE

Content

- ✓ Clear concise statements of the child's present level in the areas of behavior, social skills, cognitive/academics, and self-help skills. (Assume that therapists are covering physical, motor, language development.) Whenever possible, include quantitative information such as developmental levels and test results.

- ✓ Highlight essential program elements that have and will contribute to the child's success (i.e., adaptations, specialized equipment, management plans, peer needs, etc.).

Style

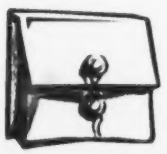
- ✓ Present information in a list or outline format; limit/avoid anecdotal reports.

- ✓ Be familiar with the content so you can answer questions about it.

— **Help parents arrange a visit to the kindergarten classroom, once the placement is made. Again, the Observation Checklist in Appendix B will be a useful guide to look at before the visit. Invite the kindergarten teacher to meet and observe the child in the preschool. This can be helpful both to the teacher and to the child, who has a chance to make a connection with this person from his/her next environment.**

— **Compile a portfolio of materials to send to the new teacher. Often the materials prepared for the CSE do not get into the hands of the classroom teacher and don't include specifics about day-to-day interventions. A portfolio can be a lifesaver for a receiving teacher trying to understand a large group of new students. This can be mailed to the teacher directly, or hand-delivered by preschool staff or the parent.**

A TRANSITION PORTFOLIO: TEACHER TO TEACHER



Cards with the following summaries on them:

- ✓ Basic child information
- ✓ Communication/augmentative systems (including list of signs, samples of boards, devices used, transcripts of typing, and a description of the nature of the support
- ✓ Motor needs/adaptations
- ✓ Learning style/curricular adaptations

Management tips:

- ✓ Relaxers
- ✓ Rewards
- ✓ Likes and dislikes
- ✓ Favorite things/activities
- ✓ Programs used (i.e., for toilet training)
- ✓ Strategies to support social interaction
- ✓ Any other helpful hints!

CSE paperwork

- ✓ Testing reports
- ✓ Medical and social history
- ✓ Individualized Education Plan
- ✓ Any other standardized tests and/or developmental checklists

Academic summary

- ✓ Levels
- ✓ Strengths and needs
- ✓ Published programs used

Work samples

Adaptive equipment that should be available for seating, mobility, communication, and to enlist the child's comfort and cooperation.

— **Prepare child to understand and be comfortable with the transition. For many children, change is difficult and the move to a new school is very anxiety-provoking. Children also sense the intense feelings of the adults around them, and often overhear the concerns about moving on to kindergarten.**

ACTIVITIES FOR THE KIDS

Review the Year:

- ✓ Favorite activities
- ✓ "What we liked about our room" stories and/or discussions
- ✓ Time capsules
- ✓ How we have grown (measure ourselves)
- ✓ Books about each child with work samples, photos, etc.
- ✓ Awards...new skills we have learned

New School:

- ✓ What will be the same? What will be different?
- ✓ Maps or pictures of the new school (the principal, teacher, custodian)
- ✓ Role plays about making new friends, asking for help
- ✓ "Let's play school"...highlighting what might be different (carrying lunch trays, seat work, announcements, gym and art class, recess, calling teachers by Miss/Mrs./Ms./Mr.)
- ✓ Field trips to the new school

Moving On and Holding On:

- ✓ Clean the room and take home art and other projects
- ✓ Make address books
- ✓ Pictures of friends and teachers (child or teacher generated)
- ✓ Make calendars of summer into fall to mark off the days until school starts
- ✓ Graduation party with family members/diploma

—**Teachers and parents can do many things to help children understand the move: familiarize them with the new building, meet new teachers, understand the timeframe by using a calendar, develop ways to stay connected.**

OTHER TOPICS OF CONCERN FOR PARENTS

Here are some examples of some topics that are often important to parents and may require extra transition planning:

I want my child to attend our neighborhood school!

One of the issues to be addressed is the question of the child attending his/her "home school," i.e., the neighborhood school. There is no right or wrong answer to the issue of the home school, but rather what makes sense to the family and the child, and what is feasible for the district. For instance, it is difficult to provide all services effectively in all schools and in some districts racial balance in home schools is a concern. However, there are a number of good arguments for sending a child to his/her home school.

RATIONALE FOR HOME SCHOOL PLACEMENT

- In a home school, there is a more natural proportion of students with disabilities and integrated services are more likely when this is true.
- Nondisabled students will grow up to be aware of and comfortable with peers with disabilities; therefore, as adults they are more likely to support their inclusion in the larger community.
- Home-school communication and family access is strengthened.
- The support of siblings is more likely as is attendance at parent conferences, the PTO, and school events.
- Continuity of programming is possible and transitions to the next grade level can be smooth; relationships with peers established in earlier grades do not get disrupted.

- A variety of relationships begun in school can be practiced and enjoyed during after school and nonschool times because children are neighbors and have access to each other.
- Travel time to the home school is shortened; typical busing is more likely and relationships can be built "in transit."

I want my child to go to kindergarten with typical kids!

There are many ways to structure kindergarten programs offering the least restrictive environment (i.e., regular contact with typical peers). Factors that need to be considered include length of day, size of group, staffing patterns, team planning time, and model of therapy services as "push in" or "pull out." Here is a chart of some inclusive models.

SOME INCLUSIVE MODELS

Model	Teacher	Assistant	Students with Needs
1	Elementary Ed.	For the classroom	✓ 1 or 2 with a Resource Teacher and/or Therapist to monitor IEP
2	Elementary Ed.	1:1 Assistant	✓ 1 or 2 with a Resource Teacher or Therapist to monitor IEP ✓ Assistant helps to carry out instructional activities
3	Dual certification	1:1 Assistant if needed or Classroom Assistant	✓ 1:3 with related services as appropriate; a Resource Teacher monitors the IEP/provides additional support
4	Teaming: Elementary Ed. with Special Education	As needed	✓ Up to 6 with related services as appropriate

A READING LIST ON TRANSITION

Byrd, M.R., & Rous, B.S. (1990). *Helpful entry level skills checklist* (Rev. ed.). Lexington, KY: Child Development Centers of the Bluegrass, Inc.

Chandler, L. (1992). Promoting children's social/survival skills as a strategy for transition to mainstreamed kindergarten programs. In S. Odom, S. McConnell, & M. McEvoy (Eds.), S*ocial competence of young children with disabilities* (pp. 245-276). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Fowler, S.S., Chandler, L.K., Johnson, T.E., & Stella, M.E. (1988). Individualized family involvement in school transitions: Gathering information and choosing the next program. *Journal of the Division of Early Childhood, 12*(3), 208-216.

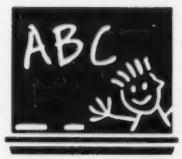
Hains, A.H. (1992). Strategies for preparing preschool children with special needs for the kindergarten mainstream. *Journal of Early Intervention, 16*(4), 1-12.

Rosenkoetter, S.E., Whaley, L.T., Hains, A.H., & Pierce, L. (2001). The evolution of transition policy for young children with special needs and their families: Past, present, and future. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21*(1), 3-15.

Rous, B., & Hallam, R.A. (1998). Easing the transition to kindergarten: Assessment of social, behavioral and functional skills in young children with disabilities. *Young Exceptional Children, 1*(4), 17-27.

MOVING ON TO KINDERGARTEN BOOKS FOR KIDS

- ✓ David Goes to School by David Shannon (Scholastic). For ages 3 to 7. A funny book about the trials of an active child who just can't seem to follow the rules.
- ✓ Off to School, Baby Duck? by Amy Hest (Candlexich Press). For ages 3 to 5. The plot revolves around Baby Duck's first day of school jitters. A simple and comforting story.
- ✓ Vera's First Day of School by Vera Rosenberry (Henry Holt). For ages 3 to 6. The story of a little girl who has waited for years to be old enough for school like her big sisters. When the day finally comes, her excitement quickly turns to fear. There is, of course, a happy ending.
- ✓ Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come by Nancy Carlson (Viking). For ages 3 to 6. Similar to the book above, this is the story of Henry which is true to life. On the first day of school, Henry decides he wants to go home.
- ✓ Day Care Days by Mary Brigid Barrett (Little, Brown). For ages 3 to 7. This book is in light-hearted rhyme and depicts a weekday in the life of a family as seen through the eyes of a young boy. Families with young children will recognize themselves in the morning rush and the sometimes difficult task of saying goodbye at the day-care center.
- ✓ My School is Worse Than Yours by Tom Toles (Puffin). For ages 7 to 10. This book is a funny fantasy about a school where the teacher is a robot.



"Everything I Needed to Know About Life I Learned in Kindergarten"
By Robert Fulghum

These are things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before eating. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some, and draw and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap in the afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup--the roots go down and the plant goes up, and nobody really knows why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup--they all die. And so do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all:

Look

Think of what a better world it would be if we all had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations always to put things back where we found them and clean up our own messes.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

Appendices

A. Kindergarten Survival Skills Checklist

B. Observation Checklist

C. Parent Perspectives on Program Needs

D. References

E. Transition to Kindergarten: A Timeline for Planning

Appendix A

Kindergarten Survival Skills Checklist

Source: Vincent, L., Salisbury, C., Walter, G., Brown, P., Gruenewald, L., & Powers, M. (1980). Program evaluation and curriculum development in early childhood/special education: Criterion of the next environment. In W. Sailor, B. Wilcox, & L. Brown (Eds.), Methods of instruction for severely handicapped students (pp. 303-328). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. Reprinted with permission.

Kindergarten Survival Skills Checklist

Student's Name: _____

Date:_____

Rating Scale Code:

1. always
2. usually
3. sometimes
4. occasionally
5. never

Skills	Rating Scale				
A. Independent Task Work					
1. Begins work within an appropriate time without extra teacher direction.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Stays on task without extra teacher direction.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Completes task within allotted time.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Completes task at criterion.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Follows routine at end of work session (e.g., waits, checks with teacher, puts materials away, goes to next activity).	1	2	3	4	5

		Rating Scale				
B.	Group Attending					
1.	Sits appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Does not disrupt peers.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Focuses visual attention on speaker(s), shifting focus appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Participates and/or follows task directions in a small group (less than 4).	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Participates and/or follows task directions in a large group (4 or more).	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Group Participation					
1.	Answers teacher's question while in group.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Asks questions while in group.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Volunteers comments while in group.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Individually speaks (addresses) a group.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Participates at appropriate time (e.g., waits for turn, waits to be recognized) in a group.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Participation in a group is relevant to the task or topic.	1	2	3	4	5

		Rating Scale				
D. Following Class Routine						
1.	Locates own possessions and returns them to appropriate locations.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Locates materials and replaces or puts them in order when finished.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Goes to various areas in the room when requested and/or directed.	1	2	3	4	5
E. Appropriate Classroom Behavior						
1.	Works/plays without disrupting or bothering peers.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Waits appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Modifies behavior when provided with verbal direction.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Reacts appropriately to changes in the routine.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Uses time between activities appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
F. Problem Solving						
1.	Recognizes that a problem exists.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Implements a strategy to solve the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Implements a second strategy if the first one fails.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Successfully solves problems, corrects errors.	1	2	3	4	5

		Rating Scale				
G. Self-Care						
1.	Takes care of own toileting needs without supervision.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Washes hands without supervision.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Undresses without supervision (except for help with fasteners).	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Dresses without supervision (except for help with fasteners).	1	2	3	4	5
H. Direction Following						
1.	Complies with simple directions provided by an adult to the child.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Complies with simple directions provided by an adult to the group.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Follows 2-step directions.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Follows 3-step directions.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Follows 4-step directions.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Follows directions provided at a previous time.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Follows directions appropriately provided to separate parts of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
I. Social/Play Skills						
1.	Spontaneously begins play activities during play time.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Maintains play activity for an appropriate length of time.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Plans a play activity in advance with a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

		Rating Scale				
4.	Plans a play activity in advance with a peer.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Carries out a planned activity.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Initiates contact with peers.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Plays according to "rules" established by play group.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Shares, exchanges materials, directs peers appropriately (assumes leader role).	1	2	3	4	5

J. Game Playing Skills

1.	Participates at the appropriate time (e.g., when it is his/her turn).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Participates appropriately by performing game actions according to rules.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Acts appropriately when it is not his/her turn.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Acts appropriately at end of game, i.e., stops playing.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Discriminates winner and loser of game, i.e., compares own to peer performance.	1	2	3	4	5

K. Functional Communication

1.	Greets peers.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Greets teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Secures peer attention appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5

		Rating Scale				
4.	Comments on own actions.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Secures teacher attention appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	States intentions.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Describes past events.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Directs others.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Asks for information.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	States needs.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Asks for help with materials.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Asks for feedback from others (reinforcement, opinions, approval, confirmation).	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Gives feedback to peers (comments on peers' actions or products).	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Comments on a topic of conversation initiated by others.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Answers questions.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Makes a choice or indicates a preference.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Restates rules or directions when asked.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Explains, justifies own behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Identifies a reason for or cause of an event.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

The attached checklist is a way to organize your information and impressions of a program when you are assessing what will be the best match for a particular student. This checklist is a way to think about your questions ahead of time and to document your visit afterward.

Part I. School Information

School: Principal:

Address: Phone:

Director of Special Education: Phone:

Classroom Teacher(s):

Certification/Experience:

Teaching Assistant(s):

Class Size: Inclusive?

Ratio of Typical/Special Needs Students:

Types of Educational Disabilities:

Ages of Students:

Length of Day:

Twelve Month Programming Options:

Years Possible to Attend School:

Future Placement Options:

Therapists on Staff:

Occupational Therapy:

Physical Therapy:

Speech Therapy:

Other Resources in the Building:

Additional Comments:

Part II. Observation Checklist

1. Room Arrangements and Atmosphere **Comments**

a. Are areas equipped for large motor movement, small motor activities, play time, skill time?

b. Are tables/desks arranged to suit the children's ages and needs?

c. Is the children's work displayed? Are there varied bulletin boards?

d. Is the room/school accessible to children with special needs (i.e., bathroom within the room, ramps, adaptive toys, computers available, materials within child's reach)?

e. Overall, is the room "child oriented"?

f. Are there a range of materials suggesting options for different levels and types of exploration (i.e., multisensory, manipulatives, toys and games)?

g. Is the atmosphere relaxed, comfortable, happy?

h. Do the children move freely and orderly around the room?

i. Does the room arrangement provide cues regarding appropriate behavior and involvement (i.e., are there visual cues for use of materials, center or organization "rules")?

j. Is the room "print-rich"?

2. Schedule **Comments**

a. Does the schedule reflect a balance of teacher directed and child-initiated activities?

b. Is there a balance between active and sitting times?

c. Is there a balance between independent, small group, and large group time?

d. Are transitions between activities predictable, organized, and with clearly defined expectations?

e. Is the schedule reviewed each day including specific content; is there a visual representation of the schedule to which children can refer for cues?

3. Social Opportunities **Comments**

a. Does the teacher help direct the children towards one another rather than towards adults?

b. Are interactions occurring naturally among the children?

c. Are their sufficient opportunities for spontaneous social interaction?

d. Does the teacher support the involvement of all children, including ones who may be hesitant or resistant to participation?

e. Does the curriculum include the development of prosocial skills and social emotional growth?

f. Are children grouped according to criteria other than academic achievement?

g. Are cooperative learning techniques utilized?

4. Lesson Preparation and Presentation **Comments**

a. Does the lesson reflect good organization skills?

b. Is the lesson well planned yet presented in an enthusiastic, spontaneous manner?

c. Are the activities and materials age-appropriate for the children?

d. Do the activities reflect a multisensory approach, using language-based, auditory, tactile, visual stimulation?

e. Does the lesson relate skills to practical application?

f. Is there evidence of adapations for individual children, an attempt to provide planful(?) individual cues, or an awareness of varying levels of understanding and participation?

g. Are extra adults utilized to support children in structured lessons? What role do they take?

h. Are augmentative cues available that suggest the option of alternative communication modes (i.e., signs, pictures/symbols, word cues)?

i. Are other than commercially prepared materials used in all content areas?

APPENDIX C

PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON PROGRAM NEEDS

1. **What are your major priorities for your child's program for the next school year?**

2. **What do you believe to be your child's strengths and weaknesses?**

3. **Are there concerns about your child's functioning at home that could be helped by work at school? (toilet training? self-help? talking/communicating?)**

4. **Are there aspects of your child's behavior that you believe need to be improved?**

5. **What methods have you found to be effective in rewarding or disciplining your child?**

6. **To what extent does your child interact with children in the neighborhood? Do you want help increasing your child's social skills?**

7. **What are your feelings about providing opportunities for your child to interact with "typical" children?**

8. **How would you like to be involved in your child's school program?**

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

On the back of this sheet, write down any additional questions you may have about your child's program, the people who will be working with him/her, what activities and supports there are for you, or *anything else you are wondering about!!*

APPENDIX D

REFERENCES

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Appendix E
TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN: A TIMELINE FOR PLANNING

	Preschool Staff	Parents	CSE/School Staff
FALL	✓ Talk with parents regarding transition ✓ Call district CSE; mention child and identify transition liaison ✓ Observe kindergarten programs ✓ Obtain copy of district kindergarten curriculum ✓ Create a log to document school contacts	✓ Talk with preschool staff about kindergarten options ✓ Observe existing kindergartens in your district ✓ Get to know district personnel by attending meetings, parent groups ✓ Network with other parents ✓ Create system to document school planning and contacts	✓ Make contact with parents of incoming children (letter or call) describing transition process ✓ Invite preschool parents to parent meetings, school events ✓ Allow parent tours of kindergarten programs
WINTER	✓ Invite district staff to observe transitioning children in preschool setting ✓ Arrange with district staff for evaluation for CSE (who will do it and when) ✓ Meet with parents to talk about child's program needs and transition process ✓ Hold parent group meeting on transition to kindergarten; include panel of parents who have previously moved on to kindergarten	✓ Educate self about legal rights, evaluation, and CSE process ✓ Attend planning meeting with district staff to discuss fall options for your child ✓ Respond to district staff request for information for evaluation ✓ Attend parent meetings regarding transition ✓ Implement alliance building with district staff (e.g., thank you note for visit or meeting; offer to be parent on CPSE or site-based planning team, etc.)	✓ Initiate contact with incoming parents regarding evaluation and transition timeline ✓ Hold planning meetings with each family and current preschool staff about fall possibilities ✓ Welcome parents into the school ✓ Begin testing for CSE ✓ Plan as a district for the group of children entering next fall
SPRING	✓ Complete all updates of goals and any testing necessary ✓ Arrange Annual Review and CSE dates ✓ Meet with parents regarding testing reports, planning meetings, CSE presentations by parents ✓ Prepare CSE oral presentation ✓ Complete transition portfolio and hand-deliver to new teacher ✓ Invite kindergarten teacher to visit preschool ✓ Prepare child for transition by visiting new school, talking about changes, creating memory books	✓ Review testing reports and staff recommendations for child ✓ Prepare for CSE meeting by planning your statement about what you want for your child ✓ Review results of CSE and request additional meeting if not satisfied ✓ Discuss with preschool staff ways to prepare your child for the transition ✓ Continue to build relationships with staff and parents in the district	✓ Complete testing and planning for CSE meeting ✓ Hold CSE and finalize classification and placement ✓ Invite parents to visit and meet teacher once placement is made ✓ Send teacher to observe child in preschool and meet parents ✓ Reach out to parents and child by arranging visit to school over spring or summer; invite to kindergarten orientation and make necessary accommodations